

No one was watching. Closing my shaking fingers around the cold bills, I slowly stood. Thirty dollars. My racing thoughts matched the adrenaline rushing throughout my veins as I imagined the possibilities. Money for shopping, gas... No one would ever know that the money I had found while sweeping the floor at work was not truly mine. Slowly, I reached toward my pocket, and stopped. "Thief, thief!" my stomach turned as my conscience screamed. I dropped the broom and marched towards the office. Needless to say, I never regret turning in the money. Integrity given by God stopped me that day. Integrity that takes a lifetime to build, yet can be destroyed in a moment. That same integrity that lives on in the lives of Americans today.

Integrity is seen in the tears running down a child's face when admitting that he broke the window. Although his friends have deserted him, he stands alone, confessing and apologizing. Streaming tears give way to the heartfelt promise of fixing his wrongs. This integrity demonstrated lives on today.

Integrity is evident in the confession of the high school teen. Admitting her faults before her parents, she lays before them the whole truth of cheating on her math test, ready to accept the consequences. This integrity lives on today.

Integrity is demonstrated in the honesty of the cashier as excess cash is returned to the frazzled mother. Instead of staying silent and keeping the money, the cashier shows his morals are important to him. Tears of thankfulness spring to the customer's eyes as she profusely thanks the cashier for his simple demonstration of integrity. This integrity lives on.

Integrity is shown in the business person's perfect attendance to work. Although many co-workers have called off to capture some more sleep, the business person arrives early to accomplish his work and finish his duty. This integrity is shown today.

Integrity is driving the speed limit. Even when on an empty, country road, integrity is refusing the urge to speed. Every time a person resists this temptation, integrity is displayed.

All around us, integrity is displayed whether we realize it or not. From children to adults, this ideal is the same. Every member of the nation of America has some degree of integrity. Yet this ideal is not limited to today, as integrity is interwoven throughout America's history. Throughout the past, men and women possessing integrity have been strong leaders which have brought America to become a strong, prosperous nation. This nation's people have passed down the ideal of integrity throughout the generations which lives on today in the lives of their posterity. The reminders these great leaders and forefathers have left us from their lives demonstrate the need for Americans to cling to the morals that they believe in and to embrace integrity. Just as I have experienced the importance of integrity in life, many other Americans every day are reminded to promote integrity.

Integrity has been given to America through the valuable men and women by God. This integrity is not just simple acts, but a whole lifetime of service to others. Americans need to value integrity today, as this is fragile and can be destroyed instantly. Integrity is essential today to ensure that the future will be profitable and successful for future generations.